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ABSTRACT

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FROM BABIES INTO BOYS AND GIRLS:

THE ACQUISITION OF GENDER IDENTITY

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FROM BABIES INTO BOYS AND GIRLS: THE ACQUISITION OF GENDER IDENTITY

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Abstract:

Naturally occurring interactions recorded during participant observation in two preschools are analyzed in order to develop a distinctively sociological theory of gender identity acquisition. Attention is focused on the use of sex categorical terms and the "grammar" of sex categorization practices underlying this usage. The analysis reveals that young children initially use the terms "girl," "boy" and "baby" as a collection of categories which is similar in form to the collection "mommy," "daddy" and "baby." Because adults typically associate children's sex categorical identity with competence, children appropriate this identity in order to avoid the discrediting identity of "baby" and become, by implication, committed to its behavioral confirmation. In attempting to behaviorally confirm this identity, moreover, children gain an awareness that the sex categories are mutually exclusive while sex-specific appearance management, pronoun usage, and others' verbal instructions convey to them that sex categorization is life-long. By the end of the preschool age period, children are actively seeking guidance concerning the behavioral expression of their sex categorical identity and are actively attempting to confirm it in interaction with others. Gender identity acquisition is not only a process of individual development, therefore. It is also the process whereby the objectivity of gender within this society is intergenerationally transmitted.

In this society, as in many others, gender lays down more, perhaps, than any other identity an understanding of what a person's ultimate nature ought to be and how and where that nature ought to be exhibited (Goffman, 1979: 8). In order to become "self-regulating participants in social encounters" (Goffman, 1967: 44), therefore, initiates into this society must come to define themselves as either male or female and to judge their appearances and performances in terms of generally accepted standards of masculinity or femininity. The acquisition of gender identity is, in other words, a fundamental aspect of primary socialization.

Despite the centrality of gender identity acquisition to primary socialization, it has not been the subject of a distinctively sociological analysis. For the most part, the acquisition of gender identity has either been explained in terms of one or another psychological theory of individual development or else implicitly assumed to be the nonproblematic outcome of biological factors and, therefore, undeserving of sociological attention. There is reason to believe, however, that a distinctively sociological analysis of the gender identity acquisition process could provide new insights into the acquisition of this crucial social identity. For example, students of this process have observed that the biographical timing of gender identity acquisition and of the acquisition of verbal language is similar (Constantinople, 1979; Money, 1980: 33), and many have proposed that young children's exposure to sex-designating verbal labels may play an important role in the gender identity acquisition process (Constantinople, 1979; Hartley, 1964; Kohlberg, 1966). Given that the distinctively sociological approach to identity acquisition which has grown out of the social psychology of George Herbert Mead (1934) stresses the role of verbal labeling, these observations and proposals suggest that such an approach may provide a useful analytical framework for the study of gender identity acquisition.

(1)

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the applicability of this analytical framework to the study of gender identity acquisition and to indicate some of the insights such an application provides. Data recorded during participant observation in two Southern California preschools[1] will be analyzed in terms of this framework in order to develop a distinctively sociological and empirically grounded theory of gender identity acquisition. Some of the proposed theory's implications concerning the intergenerational maintenance of the objectivity of gender will also be briefly mentioned.

In order to adequately analyze the gender identity acquisition process it is necessary to recognize that gender identity consists of two analytically distinct components, the categorical and the normative.[2] The categorical component refers to the definition of self as either male or female, the "appropriation of the identity" (Foote, 1951: 17), while the normative component involves a willingness to judge one's appearances and performances in terms of socially shared standards of masculinity or femininity, a behavioral commitment to the appropriated identity (Foote, 1951: 17). Given that such evaluation is only possible relative to incumbency in a category, acquisition of the categorical component of gender identity is a logical prerequisite for acquisition of its normative component. An analysis of gender identity acquisition must begin, therefore, by focusing attention on the acquisition of its categorical component.

The categorical component of gender identity involves more than a mere sex-labeling of self. It also involves recognition that such labels are indicative of a categorical identity, an identity shared with a delimited set of others. In acquiring the categorical component of gender identity, therefore, the young child must gain an awareness that persons are classifiable in terms of dichotomous sex categories and some minimal skill in recognizing persons as incumbents of these

two categories. If, as previously suggested, typical language practices play a central role in the gender identity acquisition process, then they must somehow convey such an awareness to children and promote children's acquisition of such skill.

Some years ago Harvey Sacks (1966) demonstrated that societal members' typical usage of categorical terms exhibits a type of "grammar." Sacks (1966: 16) pointed out that the typical usage of categorical terms indicates that societal members consider certain sets of these terms to "go together," to form a natural grouping of categories. These "natural collections of membership categories . . . plus whatever rules of application the use of the collection involves" Sacks (1966: 17) termed "membership categorization devices." Clearly, sex is an instance of a membership categorization device. "Members of this society consider the categories 'male' and 'female' to go together, to form a 'collection,'" and they use similar criteria in determining persons' incumbency in these two categories.

From the beginning of their lives initiates into this society are exposed to these typical sex categorization practices, at first, perhaps, through their caregivers' use of nursery variants of the sex categorically specific terms "mother" and "father." It appears that young children quickly learn that these terms can be effectively used to summon not only their parents but other adults as well. For example, observation in preschools indicates that children around two years of age often use terms like "mommy" and "daddy" to summon adults other than their parents. Of course, their success in doing so typically depends on the sex categorical appropriateness, to the adult ear, of the term used. Because adults visually celebrate their own sex category incumbency through such things as hair and clothing style, it is likely that young children quickly learn that their use of terms like "mommy" and "daddy" to summon adults will have different

consequences depending on the appearance of the targeted person. It is likely, in other words, that children's naturally occurring use of such terms promotes their acquisition of typical sex categorization practices. Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Michael Lewis (1979) found, for example, that children around two years of age not only use terms like "mommy" and "daddy" to label photographs of adult strangers but that such labeling is, for the most part, sex categorically accurate.

However, children of this age do not use such terms to summon or refer to their peers. The first categorical term they appear to use in relation to peers is "baby." For example, a teacher's aide observed a 31-month-old girl chasing a small nonverbal boy on a preschool playground. She asked the girl: "What ya doing, G?" The girl responded: "Get baby." On another occasion the observer and a small nonverbal boy encountered a larger and more verbally skilled 31-month-old boy on a preschool playground. The larger boy pointed to the smaller boy and remarked: "The baby." As these two incidents suggest, young children typically reserve the label "baby" for peers whose motor and verbal skills are not comparable to those of the speaker. These skills appear to supply the criteria children between two and three years of age[3] use in categorizing one another as "babies" or, implicitly, "not babies." While children in this age range often categorize adults in terms of sex, it appears that they categorize peers primarily in terms of what might best be termed "social maturity."

By their third birthday, moreover, children typically use the categorical labels "mommy," "daddy" and "baby" as a natural collection which combines the classificatory dimensions of sex and social maturity. As Sacks (1966: 25) suggested, children around this age use these three terms as categories forming a single categorization device "family." This is most apparent in their adoption and assignment of identities during house play and other role-playing activities.

For example, the observer was on a preschool playground watching the play of two 38-month-old girls when both announced to him in succession: "I'm a giant." One of the girls then declared: "You're a giant, too." When the observer agreed she specified: "You be the daddy giant." The other girl quickly added: "We'll be baby giants." While the categorization device "family" may not be directly related to the acquisition of gender identity, it does appear to provide a categorizational "grammar" which is crucial to the gender identity acquisition process. The nuclear family may play an important role in this process, therefore, not so much as an existent social unit but as a semantic system.

In labeling themselves and their peers, children between two and three years of age often use the categorical terms "girl," "boy" and "baby" as if they composed a single peer categorization device similar in form to the device "family." For example, a 28-month-old girl brought a book to the observer entitled Goldilocks and the Three Bears and featuring a drawing of a sleeping Goldilocks on the cover. The observer asked: "What's that about?" The girl quickly responded "a baby" but then paused and looked at the cover of the book and answered "a girl." On another occasion a 28-month-old was remarking about a child she termed a "baby" when the observer inquired: "Are you a baby?" She loudly responded: "NO! GIRL!" A similar distinction is also drawn between "boys" and "babies" by children in this age range.

As previously suggested, the criteria young children appear to use in distinguishing "babies" from "boys" and "girls" are social skills or, in a more generalized sense, social maturity. This is suggested not only by the preceding example of self-labeling but also by the behaviors young children exhibit when playfully adopting the identity "baby." For example, the observer asked a 39-month-old boy and 38-month-old girl who were crawling on the floor, throwing toys, and repeating the verbalization "ga-ga:" "What are you two doing?" The girl responded:

"We're babies." The behaviors engaged in by these two children are typical of the behaviors children around three years of age exhibit when enacting the identity of "baby." Apparently, they consider these behaviors expressive of "babiness."

Because socially immature behavior is considered characteristic of "babies," "baby" is a discrediting categorical identity among children. It is often used, therefore, as a negative sanction. For example, the observer had left a group of children with whom he had been playing in order to comfort a sobbing casualty of a playground accident (B). A 44-month-old member of the group with whom the observer had been playing walked over to the observer and demanded: "Com'on. Let's play gasman." The observer answered: "B has just been hurt. I'll play with you in a minute." The other boy then remarked: "We think he's a baby." Adults also employ this discrediting categorical identity when attempting to control children's behavior. For example, three boys, all around three and a half years of age, were sneaking into a preschool room reserved for younger children when their teacher walked up behind them and asked: "Where are you going?" All three boys turned and looked up at the teacher and she inquired: "Do you want to stay in here and play with the babies?" Without answering, all three boys hurriedly left the room. It appears that even the accusation of wanting to associate with "babies" is discrediting to young children. At least these boys did not want to provide confirmatory evidence for such an accusation.

"Baby" is, in other words, a despised identificatory category among children, and one in which incumbency must be denied. This was illustrated on another occasion when a 39-month-old boy picked up a rattle in a preschool classroom and remarked: "This is for babies." He then took the rattle around the room and separately inquired of eight younger children: "Are you a baby?" None of the eight responded positively and four responded with a loud "NO." In order to

effectively avoid being identified as a "baby," however, children must claim an alternative categorical identity, one that will clearly differentiate them from "babies."

The alternative identity available to children for this purpose is a sex categorical identity, either "boy" or "girl." This is the identity typically made available to them by adults and the identity adults typically equate with social maturity or competence when interacting with children. For example, adults often implicitly equate competence with children's sex categorical identity when encouraging them to attempt various tasks, as when a preschool teacher encouraged a 30-month-old girl to pick up a chair by remarking: "G, you can do it. You're such a big girl." Adults also employ children's sex categorical identity as a warrant for refusing them assistance, as when a teacher's aide refused a 29-month-old boy's request for help in climbing a playground structure by answering: "No B, you're such a big boy. You can do it." Moreover, adults justify holding children to certain behavioral standards of maturity on the grounds of their sex categorical identity, as when a teacher's aide lectured a 38-month-old girl who had struck another child.

> You're a big girl now. You don't need to hit. Talk to her when she does something wrong.

In various ways, therefore, adults implicitly instruct children that big "boyness" and big "girlness" are synonymous with social competence.[4]

Because children want to avoid being characterized as incompetent, being identified as a "baby," they identify with the self-label which they have been implicitly instructed to equate with competence, "boy" or "girl." For example, a 31-month-old girl was overheard justifying her refusal of aid in obtaining a glass of water in these terms: "No help. I big girl." Preschool age children are often heard justifying their resistance to adult interference in their affairs by

claiming big "boyness" or "girlness." It appears as if they claim such an identity in order to distinguish themselves from "babies" who do not have a right to resist such interference.

In order to secure a claim to competence, moreover, children must identify with a sex categorical label that will be accepted by adults. To identify with a sex categorical label adults consider "inappropriate" is to confirm one's incompetence. In research assessing the sex labeling abilities of young children, Spencer Thompson (1975) found that while 24-month-olds were relatively accurate in sex labeling photographs of strangers, they did not "perform well" when asked to sex label themselves. However, the overwhelming majority of 30-month-olds did correctly sex label themselves upon request.[5] Observation of the naturally occurring use of sex categorical labels in preschools suggests that these results may reflect not so much children's increasing knowledge of their sex categorical identity but the increasing salience of that identity in their social interactional experience. While two-year-olds can accurately discriminate between male and female adults, as indicated by their use of terms such as "mommy" and "daddy," their own sex categorical identity is of minor concern. With increasing social interactional experience, however, the child learns that this identity is a badge of competence, an acceptable warrant for fuller participation in the affairs of the social world. It is likely, therefore, that the sex categorical label adults typically use in identifying a child will become an intrinsically rewarding identity for that child sometime during his or her third year of social life.

Adults' typical equating of the child's sex categorical identity with competence also provides the key to understanding children's acquisition of the normative component of gender identity. As Nelson Foote (1951: 337) pointed out, an identity "is not absolutely given but is more or less problematic," requiring continual experiential confirmation. In order to confirm an identity the individual must

exhibit patterns of behavior which others will explicitly recognize as expressive of it. In this sense, Foote (1951: 338) noted, a name, a social categorical label, can motivate behavior, especially in the absence of acceptable alternative identities. Because the general pattern of social categorical labeling to which young children are routinely exposed affords the child only two alternative social categorical identities, the despised identity of "baby" or the particular sex categorical identity made available by adults, the young child attempts to behaviorally secure his or her claim to the latter identity in order to avoid the discrediting identity of "baby." In this sense, the child's appropriation of a sex categorical identity motivates the child to judge his or her appearances and performances in terms of socially shared standards of masculinity or femininity.

Empirically, therefore, acquisition of the categorical component of gender identity is intrinsically related to acquisition of its normative component. The child's sex categorical definition of self, which results from adults' continual sex labeling of the child and equating of competence with this identity, motivates the child to seek behavioral guidelines which will aid in securing his or her claim to this sex categorical identity. The sequence of (feminine) gender identity acquisition which this analysis suggests can be summarized in syllogistic form.

> I do not want to be a baby, I can be a girl, therefore I want to be a girl, therefore doing things that make me a girl are rewarding.

Because of the typical sex categorization practices to which children are routinely exposed, their appropriation of the sex categorical identity made available to them by adults carries with it a commitment to its behavioral confirmation.

In acquiring the normative component of gender identity, moreover, its categorical component becomes more delimited. As previously implied, young children initially treat the distinction between "babies" and both "boys" and "girls" as more significant than that between "boys" and "girls." Unlike adults, they do not

appear to use sex categorical terms as indicating oppositional, either-or, categorization. For example, a 33-month-old boy was overheard remarking to a teacher's aide: "Horses are for boys." The aide then asked: "They're not for girls?" He immediately answered: "Yea, girls ride 'em too." Although the aide assumed that if horses were for boys they could not be for girls, it does not appear that the boy intended any such implication. In other words, he did not appear to share the aide's oppositional conception of sex categorization.

In attempting to behaviorally confirm their "boyness" or "girlness," however, children gradually acquire this element of adult sex categorization practices. They learn that in order to elicit responses from others which confirm their sex categorical identity they must not only refrain from acting like "babies" but from acting like incumbents of the other sex category as well. They learn, in other words, that "boyness" and "girlness" are mutually exclusive. By the time they are three and a half years of age children are not only actively seeking guidance concerning how they should behave in order to express their big "boyness" or "girlness." They are also actively seeking guidance concerning how they can avoid behaving in ways that might be seen as expressive of the other sex categorical identity.

Although children around this age have both appropriated and are behaviorally committed to a particular gender identity, they must acquire yet another element of adult sex categorization practices in order for this identity to become firmly rooted. They must learn that sex categorization is independent of categorization in terms of social maturity, what Lawrence Kohlberg (1966) has termed the "concept of gender constancy." For example, a 40-month-old boy was observed placing a western style hat on his head and announcing to a same-aged girl: "I'm a cowboy." He then placed a western hat on the observer's head and remarked: "You're a

cowboy man." The girl, in turn, placed a western hat on her head and announced: "I'm a cowboy girl." As this incident illustrates, children of this age appear to treat the distinction between sex categorically similar adult and peer labels as of the same status as that between sex categorically different peer labels. It does not appear, in other words, that they are aware that boys and men belong to a single sex category and girls and women to another or, by implication, that sex categorization is life-long, that boys grow into men and girls into women.

Kohlberg (1966) has estimated that children do not acquire this concept of gender constancy until they are between five and six years of age. Because he maintains that "preceived sex differences in bodily structures and capacities" are central to the acquisition of gender identity, he deduces that children can not understand that boys grow into men and girls into women until they mature into the Piagetian stage of "concrete operations," until they are capable of understanding that basic physical characteristics are conserved despite changes in context. However, the growth of boys into men and girls into women involves radical changes in "bodily structures and capacities" and not, for the most part, physical conservation. It is more likely, therefore, that acquisition of the concept of gender constancy is primarily a function of social interactional experience and not of cognitive maturity as conceived of by Piaget (1947) and Kohlberg.

One aspect of the social environment which may serve to convey the concept of gender constancy to children is the sex-specific management of appearance. The hair and clothing styles of preschool age children closely resemble, for the most part, those of their adult sex categorical counterparts. It is not uncommon, for example, for preschool age girls to wear dresses, brassiere-like garments, and earrings. This sex-specific appearance mangement heightens the perceptual

similarity between adult and child incumbents of each sex category, thereby underlining the sex categorical similarity of men and boys and of girls and women.

Like the socially managed visual environment, the linguistic environment may also convey the independence of sex categorization and categorization in terms of social maturity to children. Because English third person singular pronouns are sex-specific, children must learn that boys and men are to be treated as a single category of persons and girls and women as another in order to become competent speakers. It is likely that adult responses to children's usage of these pronouns serve to instruct children concerning the sex categorical "appropriateness" of these terms and, by implication, of the independence of sex categorization and categorization in terms of social maturity.

In addition to these subtle influences, it is also likely that children receive explicit verbal instruction, not only from adults but from older children as well, concerning this principle. For example, a 36-month-old boy was heard announcing to a 46-month-old boy: "I'm Wonderwoman." The older boy knit his brow and lectured the younger boy.

> No you're not. Boys aren't Wonderwoman. Wonderwoman's a girl. You're not a girl.

Clearly, interactions such as this serve to instruct young children of the intrinsic connection between adult and peer sex categorical labels.

Regardless of the particular factors responsible, children display an awareness of the concept of gender constancy at an earlier age than Kohlberg predicts they should. For example, a teacher's aide was overheard asking a 44-month-old boy: "When are you going to take me on the train?" The boy responded: "When I get to be a big man." On another occasion, moreover, a teacher's aide was overheard asking a 52-month-old boy: "How can you tell a boy is a boy and a girl is a girl?" The boy gave a lengthy answer.

> Well, maybe 'cause girls can wear dresses and grow up to be mommies and their tummies swell up and daddies just don't. Mommies are women, though.

Although this boy's usage of sex categorically specific labels may not be identical to that of most adults, it does indicate that he is aware of the independence of sex categorization and categorization in terms of social maturity. It appears, therefore, based on children's naturally occurring usage of sex categorical labels, that they acquire the concept of gender constancy before the end of the preschool age period, around four years of age.

By this age, moreover, the child has become the principle agent of his or her own gender socialization. Once children learn that sex categorization is independent of categorization in terms of social maturity, they recognize that the standards in terms of which their competence is judged are standards applicable to all incumbents of the sex category with which they identify. They closely observe the behavior of their sex categorical counterparts, therefore, for guidance in their attempts to behaviorally confirm their masculinity or femininity. They do not passively model such behavior, however, but critically evaluate it in terms of their developing standards of gender expression.

In research assessing the television preferences of children, for example, Sprafkin and Liebert (1978) found that their six to seven-year-old subjects payed significantly more attention to programs dominated by characters who shared their sex categorical identity than to programs dominated by characters of the other sex. Moreover, Sprafkin and Liebert also found that such programs were attended to more closely if the characters exhibited stereotypically masculine or feminine behaviors than if they exhibited more gender neutral behavior. While the images of masculinity and femininity which surround children provide them guidance in their attempts to behaviorally confirm their sex categorical identity, these findings suggest that

children are not, as is often implied, passively molded by such images. Rather, they evaluate such images in terms of their developing standards of masculinity or femininity before taking guidance from them.

To summarize, analysis of preschool age children's membership categorization practices and those to which they are routinely exposed is suggestive of both the typical pattern of gender identity acquisition in this society and the social interactional factors responsible for it. Due to adults' visual celebration of their own sex category incumbency and their routine exposure of young children to sex categorically specific verbal labels, children learn to classify adults by sex at a very early age. Soon thereafter, moveover, children begin to identify themselves with the sex categorical label adults have typically used in identifying them[6] and have typically equated with competence. Children do so in order to avoid the discrediting categorical identity of "baby." Because adults implicitly provide children with only one path into fuller participation in the affairs of their social world, via either "boyness" or "girlness," children not only appropriate this identity but seek to behaviorally confirm it in interaction with others. In doing so, they find that confirmation of this identity requires avoidance of behaviors that might be seen as expressive of the other sex categorical identity and begin, therefore, to treat the sex categories as oppositional. At the same time, moreover, the socially managed visual environment, the linguistic environment, and others' verbal instructions convey to children that sex categorization is independent of categorization in terms of social maturity. They gradually become aware, therefore, that the behavior of their adult sex categorical counterparts can provide them guidance in confirming their sex categorical identity and that they must meet these sex-specific standards of behavior in order to obtain the rights and privileges afforded adults.

Although the theory of gender identity acquisition outlined above is only suggestive, it is indicative of both the appropriateness and fruitfulness of a distinctively sociological analysis of the gender identity acquisition process. Gender identity acquisition is not only an important aspect of individual psychological development. It is also the process whereby the seeming objectivity of gender is intergenerationally transmitted. Through it, initiates into this society become self-regulating masculine and feminine persons who reproduce a social world in which gender provides an understanding of persons' ultimate natures. Sociological analysis of the gender identity acquisition process can provide insights not only into the personal importance of gender during other biographical periods, therefore, but into the historical maintenance of the objectivity of gender as well.

For example, analysis of the gender identity acquisition process may aid in explaining the historical maintenance of so-called distinctive male and female modes of consciousness (Smith, 1979). As the preceding analysis suggests, the gender identity acquisition process leads children to attempt to behaviorally confirm their sex categorical identity. In doing so, they find that certain activities are conducive to the behavioral expression of masculinity while others are conducive to the behavioral expression of femininity. Boys and girls would be likely to engage in different activities, therefore, in order to facilitate the behavioral confirmation of their sex categorical identities. In fact, previous research indicates that children's activities are typically segregated by sex (Lever, 1976). Such self-imposed sex segregation may lead, in turn, to the reproduction by successive generations of distinctive male and female subcultures in this society.

This self-imposed sex segregation among children may also account for some of the apparent difficulties male and female members of this society experience

when interacting with one another (Cahill, 1981). In order to gain recognition as adult males and females, members of this society must demonstrate what might best be termed heterosocial skill. They must both behaviorally express their own and facilitate differently sexed others' behavioral expression of gender in a variety of contexts. Due to the typical segregation of the sexes during childhood, however, members of this society do not typically have an opportunity to acquire such skill until adolescence. In other words, they must, in most cases, acquire such skill while simultaneously attempting to demonstrate it. This may not only produce strains in cross-sex interactions among adolescents but may also lead to feelings of insecurity and self-consciousness among adult cross-sex interactants.

In any case, the gender identity acquisition process may be of considerable sociological significance. If, as the preceding analysis suggests, the typical pattern of gender identity acquisition in this society launches a continuing biographical process of self-evaluation in terms of socially transmitted standards of masculinity or femininity, then the ability of members of this society to measure up to such standards is a major source of their sense of competence. They are likely to resist, therefore, attempts to interfere with their expression of gender and to unwittingly confirm intergenerationally transmitted conceptions of the ultimate natures of sex category incumbents despite changes in the socio-economic roles of males and females. The key to understanding the apparent resiliency of seemingly out-dated conceptions of gender may lie, in other words, in the gender identity acquisition process.

Notes

[1]The author spent approximately 300 hours as a volunteer staff member in a university-affiliated and parent-cooperative preschool. The reported interactions were recorded as close to verbatim as possible in fieldnotes.

[2]This conceptualization is borrowed from Zimmerman and West (1977).

[3]The age estimates provided in this paper should be interpreted only as guides for determining sequential patterns. The acquisition of membership categorization practices is a function of interactional experience, not chronological or physical age, per se. Chronological age provides a rough estimate of what can be called, following Denzin (1975: 471), "interactional age" but not a precise measurement.

[4]Although sex categorically neutral terms such as "big kid" could conceivably be used in this way, instances of such usage were not observed. Given that this society is populated not by persons, as such, but by sexed persons, this is not surprising. For adult members of this society, a child must be either a big boy or big girl in order to be a big kid.

[5]Thompson (1975: 346) did not find any significant correlations between children's sex labeling abilities and parental background and attitude variables. This provides some indirect assurance concerning the generalizability of the findings reported here.

[6]Interestingly, Richard Green (1974: 225) reports, based on parental interviews, that so-called "feminized" boys treated at the UCLA Gender Identity Clinic had been misidentified and mislabeled as female early in their lives much more often than a matched sample of "masculine" boys.

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